

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

SAB-01 IO-10 AID-05 /074 W

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R 051436Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7963

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 70

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH MARONITE PATRIARCH

REF BEIRUT 69

1. HAD EIGHTY MINUTE CORDIAL CONVERSATION THIS MORNING, JAN 5, WITH MARONITE PATRIARCH KHURAYSH. HE HAD NOT REPEAT NOT YET SEEN ARTICLE REFTEL BUT DISCUSSED VERY FRANKLY AND BRUTALLY HIS VIEWS ON MARONITE MONKS AND ROLE THEY ARE APPARENTLY TRYING TO PLAY IN LEBANON TODAY. THIS WAS OBVIOUSLY A VERY SORE POINT TO HIM, FOR HE WENT INTO SEVERAL ANECDOTES ABOUT MONKS WHO ARE INVOLVED IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY, WHICH HE IS CONVINCED IS DETRIMENTAL TO A COUNTRY'S OVERALL SITUATION, AS WELL AS THAT OF THE CHURCH.

2. PATRIARCH ASKED ME TO DESCRIBE MY CONVERSATIONS WITH FATHER KASSIS REPORTED EMBTEL 15684 (NOTAL). IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS HE EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN THAT FATHER KASSIS AND HIS ASSOCIATES WERE INVOLVING THEMSELVES TOO DEEPLY IN LEBANESE POLITICAL MATTERS.

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3. PATRIARCH INQUIRED RE MY VIEWS ON WHERE WE SHOULD PROCEED. WITH CAVEATS I TOLD HIM WE WERE IMPRESSED WITH THE FIVE POINTS GROWING OUT OF THE SYRIAN INTERVENTION AND IT SEEMED TO US THAT THESE CONSTITUTED A SOUND BASIS FOR SEEKING A SOLUTION TO THE LEBANESE SITUATION. PATRIARCH NODDED VIGOROUSLY IN ASSENT. HE WONDERED, HOWEVER, WHY CURRENT POSITION OF BOTH FRANGIE AND CHAMOUN WAS MUCH HARDER NOW THAN HERETOFORE. THIS TENDED TO NULLIFY FIVE POINTS. I SAID THAT WAS MY VIEW AS WELL, BUT I HAD NOT GIVEN UP HOPE FOR FIVE POINTS. KHURAYSH SAID HE WELCOMED THIS POSITION AND HOPED WE WOULD CONTINUE TO PREACH MODERATION WITH OUR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS.

4. KHURAYSH DISCUSSED AN EVENTUAL GUARANTEE BY USG AND OTHERS OW WHATEVER AGREEMENT MIGHT BE REACHED IN THE LEBANON. I TOLD HIM WHAT KASSIS AND I HAD DISCUSSED ON THIS MATTER AND HE SAID HE HOPED I MIGHT BE ABLE TO OBTAIN FROM THE DEPARTMENT SOME SORT OF A CONTINGENCY STATEMENT. I BELIEVE IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL FOR ME TO HAVE THE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION TO WHAT I TOLD KASSIS.

5. KHURAYSH, WHO HAD SEEN RAYMOND EDDE FOR A LONG TIME YESTERDAY, DISCUSSED PARTITION. HE IS VIOLENTLY OPPOSED TO IT AND EVEN SOME SORT OF FEDERAL STRUCTURE. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT RAYMOND EDDE WAS MOST ELOQUENT IN REPORTING WHAT HE HAD "LEARNED" IN THE U.S. ON OUR VIEWS RE PARTITION. I DENIED VIGOROUSLY ANY U.S. SUPPORT FOR PARTITION, EMPHASIZING THE FACT THAT IN ALL LETTERS OR MESSAGES TO LEBANESE LEADERS, U.S. LEADERS ALWAYS EMPHASIZED LEBANESE UNITY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. PATRIARCH SMILED GRACIOUSLY, CONCURRING, BUT POINTING OUT THAT RAYMOND EDDE SEEMS TO HAVE THE LAST SAY ON THIS POINT. THIS LEADS ME STRONGLY TO RECOMMEND WE MAKE SOME PUBLIC OFFICIAL STATEMENT ALONG THE LINES RECOMMENDED EMBTEL 0032 (NOTAL).

6. CONVERSATION ENDED ON A MOST CORDIAL NOTE, WITH KHURAYSH REQUESTING I CONTINUE TO SPEAK TO CHRISTIANS ALONG THE LINES OF MODERATION, CONCESSION ETC. HE ALSO INDICATED HE HOPED I COULD LET THESE VIEWS BE KNOWN TO MODERATE MOSLEMS.

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